Communication, Collaboration, Connection: Building Leadership Potential

Participant Guide

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Welcome

Welcome to this TEL (Technology Enhanced Learning) training event. We are excited that you will be joining us today for *Communication, Collaboration, Connection: Building Leadership Potential*, and we look forward to helping you to get as much out of this time as possible.

Your classroom today is not very large, 125 or fewer students from as many as 40 different locations across the NPS. We purposely keep the class size small to assure that if you have a question, there is time to get it answered. Don't hesitate to ask—if you have a question, there are probably several others in the class who have the same question—you might as well be the one to ask! It is our goal that you leave class today with no unanswered questions.

How To Interact with the Instructor

We encourage you to ask questions and share your comments with the instructors throughout this TELNPS course.

If you were physically in the classroom with the instructor, you would raise your hand to let her/him know you had a question or comment. Then you would wait for the instructor to recognize you and ask for your question. We are all familiar with that "protocol" for asking questions or making comments.

With TELNPS courses there is also a "protocol" to follow to ensure that you can easily ask questions and others can participate as well. It may seem a little strange at first asking a question of a TV monitor. Remember, it is the instructor you are interacting with and not the monitor. As you ask more questions and participate in more TELNPS courses, you will soon be focusing only on the content of your question and not the equipment you are using to ask it.

As part of the TEL station equipment at your location, there are several push-to-talk microphones. Depending on the number of students at your location, you may have one directly in front of you or you may be sharing one with other students at your table.

When you have a question, press and hold down the push-to-talk button, maintaining a distance of 12-18 inches, and say,

"Excuse me [instructor's first name], this is [your first name]

at [your location]. I have a question (or I have a comment)."

Then release the push-to-talk button. This is important.

Until you release the button, you will not be able to hear the instructor.

The instructor will acknowledge you and then ask for your question or comment. Stating your name and location not only helps the instructor, but also helps other students who are participating at different locations to get to know their classmates.

✓ Course Overview

Why a *Communication, Collaboration, Connection: Building Leadership Potential* program?

Effective leaders must be skilled at building relationships with their colleagues, receiving input from a variety of sources, and getting their own messages across. Today's class will cover some of the more common challenges to communicating and collaborating with others, to build connections both within and outside the National Park Service.

Target Audience

This TEL course is part of the Emerging Leaders Consortium. ELC participants are expected to attend 5 TEL programs and 1 residential training program, then apply classroom knowledge into the workplace. This session also counts 3 hours toward the Supervision, Management, and Leadership annual training requirement. For additional information contact Sandy Taylor, Program Manager at the Capital Training Center (202- 354-1413 or email NPS Emerging Leaders).

Program Timing

Communication, Collaboration, Connection: Building Leadership Potential is a 3-hour TELNPS course.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Recognize the importance of the role of effective communication in building collaborative relationships

- Use 3 communication tools to enhance collaborative relationships with colleagues

- Examine 6 keys to healthy communication

- Identify the benefits of collaborative behaviors

- Practice 7 steps to enhance problem-solving and collaboration

- Create an action plan to implement effective communication and collaboration skills

Site Point-of-Contact Responsibilities

The TEL Station Site Point-of-Contact must reserve the training room, notify employees that the park will be participating in this TEL training event, make sure the Participant Guide is available to students, set up the TEL Station on the day of the training, make sure students sign in on the Student Roster form, and finalize the roster in My Learning Manager.

Communication, Collaboration, Connection: Building Leadership Potential Course Map

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│          Pre-Course             │
│     Communications Check        │
│      (Site Coordinators Only)   │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│       Welcome and Review of     │
│            Objectives           │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│        Role of Effective        │
│        Communication in         │
│    Collaborative Relationships  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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│         Tools to Enhance        │
│    Collaborative Relationships  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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│     Benefits of Collaborative   │
│            Behaviors            │
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│       Problem-Solving and       │
│          Collaboration          │
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│            Wrap-Up              │
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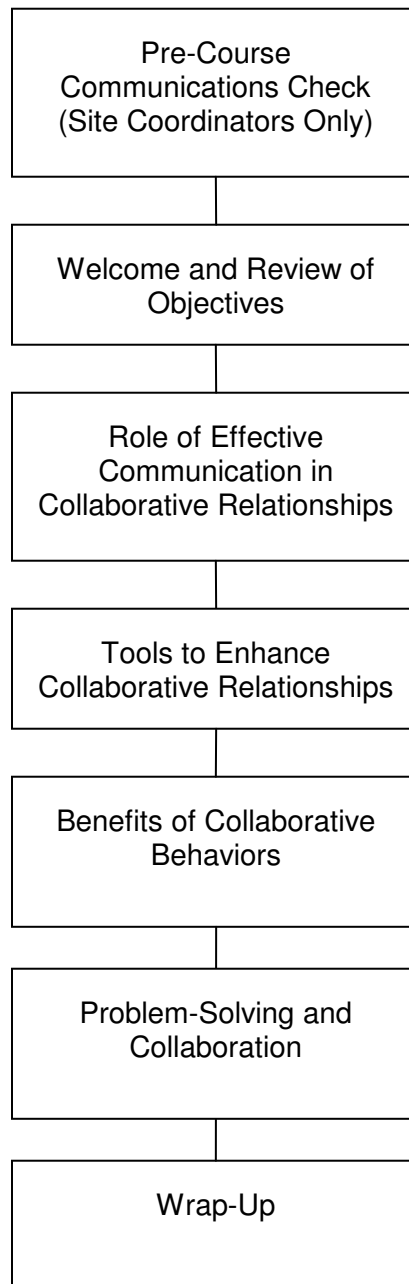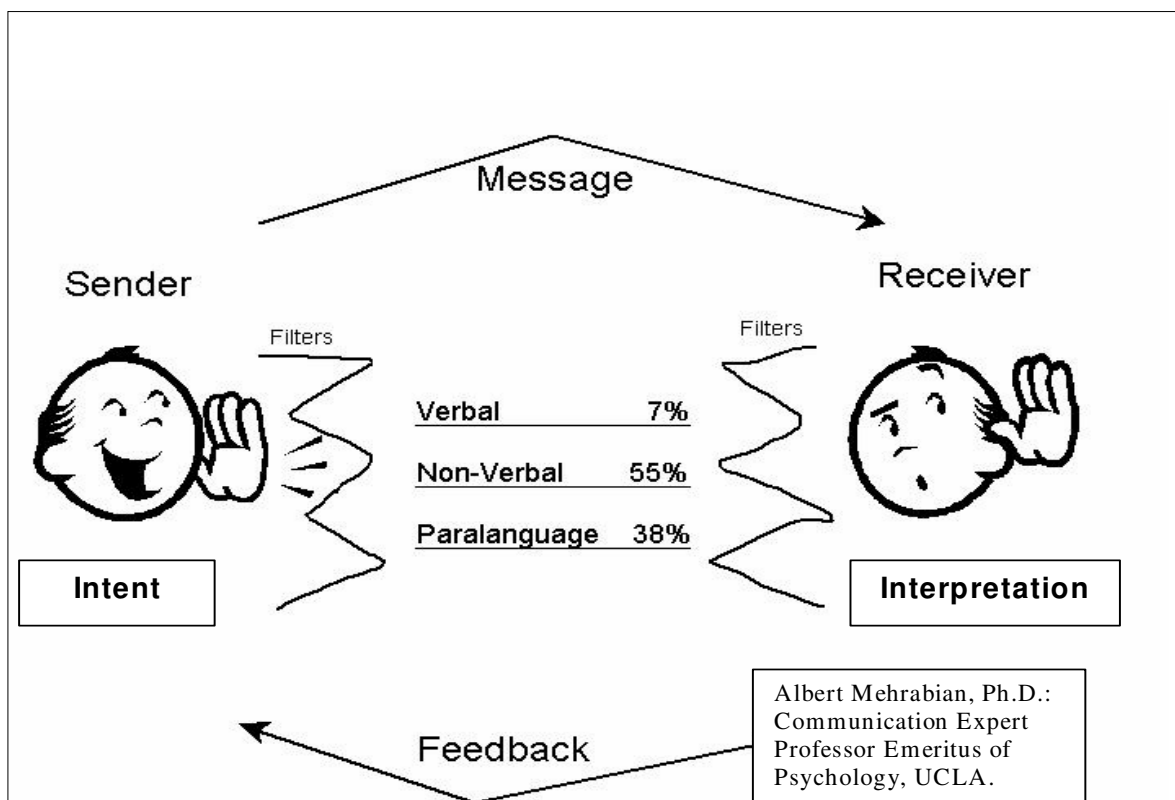
Role of Effective Communication in Collaborative Relationships

"Our titles are granted, but our leadership qualities earn us respect."

--James Kouzes and Barry Posner

Tools To Enhance Collaborative Relationships

How can we ensure effective communication? Today, we will explore 3 communication tools that can help us to build collaborative relationships and enhance our leadership potential.

1. **Awareness and minimizing of "filters"**
2. **Collaborative responding**
3. **Communication style**

Awareness of Our Filters

Each of us has filters that operate often subconsciously to manage information.

Internal filters are those that make us who we are; they are, in a sense, demographics. Examples include age or gender.

External filters are outside of us, for example, noise and distractions.

If unchecked, filters can become barriers that interfere with our ability to listen (receive) effectively and impact how we interpret or understand what another is saying and how we respond. It is important to note that each of us has filters that operate continuously. We should strive to understand how they impact our communication and seek to minimize their negative effects before they become barriers to communication.

Exercise: Barriers to Communication

At your site, work together to list barriers to communication in each of the 2 categories below.

Internal (e.g., age, gender)   **External** (e.g., noise, distractions)

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____
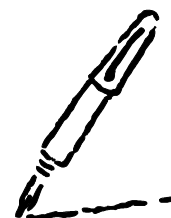
Which of these filters will ALWAYS impede the model of communication?

Tips for Minimizing Filters

1. **Be open to feedback.** Ask a trusted friend or colleague to share thoughts about how you communicate with others (especially with those who you find more challenging to carry on a dialogue). Are there obvious filters that may not be so obvious to you? Have them share with you the non-verbal gestures (rolling of eyes, checking your watch) and tone of voice (sharp, condescending) you use with others. We can produce better results when we're given feedback about how we're progressing.

2. **Be honest.** Look for patterns of filters in your behavior. Are you finding it exceptionally challenging to communicate with a specific person? Write down all of the internal and external filters you believe exist on your part. Work on changing your behavior based on your discovery. For example, if you are uncomfortable talking with someone at work because "they are from a younger generation and don't have enough experience or knowledge," then practice actively listening without interrupting, with a receptive and open mind, to what the person has to say. Eliminate external factors that may be causing you to focus your attention elsewhere. Afterward, consider something you gained by having that conversation, whether it was in the form of information or that you got to better know your co-worker. Build on the positives.

3. **Be empathic.** Stop and take the view of the other person. Walk in his or her shoes. Do you now understand better where this person is coming from? You DON'T have to agree. Our goal here is enhance communication with and respect for our colleagues.

4. **Be proactive.** Take the initiative to enhance communication with others. Practice the *Seven Steps to Problem Solving and Collaboration* that we will be discussing later in the course.

5. **Be curious.** Continue to learn about yourself. Courses such as these will help you to stay in touch with your strengths as well as your developmental needs. Continue to learn as much as you can for self-improvement.

Exercise: Filters and Stereotyping

Review the statements below. What filters are evident in these statements?

1. Two visitors arrive at your office, one is in a wheelchair. The guest in a wheelchair asks an employee who is standing nearby for some general information about National Park Service sites. The employee responds, addressing the individual who is NOT in the wheelchair.

   _____

   _____

2. A white-haired couple arrives at your park with several teenagers. The couple asks about outdoor activities. The Visitor Use Assistant responds, speaking slowly and loudly to the couple, about activities for the kids.

   _____

   _____

3. You overhear a colleague questioning the credentials of a newly-hired analyst in your office, who comes from another agency outside the Department of the Interior. This individual was chosen over several NPS employees in the office.

   _____

   _____

4. Two families are browsing in your park's gift shop. One is dressed in polo shirts and crisply pressed shorts with bright white sneakers. The other is dressed in faded denim, T-shirts, and worn-out shoes. The cashier greets the first family and asks, "Are you finding everything you need?" The second family receives a faint smile and no greeting.

   _____

   _____

Responding in a Collaborative Way

A **collaborative response** can be defined as "

All of us deal with important and stressful matters where emotions can run high. Understanding what our colleagues want can help resolve a challenging situation to everyone's satisfaction. Some of the more common results that our colleagues would like to see in response to their situations are listed below. Do these apply to you, as well?

- To be taken seriously

- To be treated with respect

- To feel important

- To receive immediate action

- To clear up a problem so it doesn't happen again

- To feel that someone is listening

- To receive a truthful answer

- To receive a response that does not seem like an insult

Exercise: Creating Collaborative Responses

Review the statements below. Rewrite the statements to reflect a more collaborative approach.

1. That's not what I asked you to do.

_____

2. Please calm down. There's no reason to be upset.

_____

3. Your documentation is too long. We don't have time for that.

_____

4. You haven't been here long enough.

_____

Tips for Creating Collaborative Responses

Consider the following when responding to your colleagues:

1. How would I want to hear that same piece of information? Do I think before I speak or do my emotions take over?

2. How ongoing is the issue? If someone's *documentation IS too long*, for example, is it the first time? Is it ongoing? Shouldn't you be opening up a positive line of communication to correct the issue? Realize that the other person will better correct the problem through collaborative efforts rather than abrupt feedback. The solution will become the focus, not the negative feedback.

3. Based on how I respond to my colleagues, will I be able to maintain healthy relationships with them? Will they want to communicate with me if my pattern of responses does not show collaborative efforts?

Use these questions as a self-monitoring checklist. If you do not like the answers today, then take the initiative to change those answers tomorrow.

Effectively Applying Our Communication Styles

Often, we approach communication based on a style that is comfortable for us. We may have several styles that we prefer, but their effectiveness is going to be determined by **how** we apply the style, and how the receiver's style interacts with ours.

On the following page is a Communication Style Checklist. Read the directions below before you proceed to the next page.

Directions: Check all words in both columns that describe you at work. There is no limit to the amount of descriptors you can select.

To score the instrument, draw a vertical line down the center and a horizontal line through the center to form quadrants. In the **upper right quadrant, place a Roman Numeral I.** In the **lower right, place II.** In the **lower left, place a III**, and in the **upper left, place a IV**. Count the number of checks in each quadrant and write that number in the quadrant.

Communication Styles Checklist

STYLE_____

- orderly
- cautious
- performs precise work
- likes controlled circumstances
- diplomatic
- likes assurances of security
- utilizes critical thinking
- soft spoken
- follows directives and standards
- prescribed
- likes status quo, unless assured quality
- control
- prefers no sudden or abrupt changes
- harmonious
- checks for accuracy
- humble
- obliging
- tends to be serious and persistent
- respectful
- devout
- agreeable
- well-disciplined

STYLE_____

- dislikes conflict
- patient with others
- thorough
- generous
- takes time to listen
- demonstrates loyalty
- considerate of other's needs
- likes security and stability
- likes status quo unless given reason for change
- minimal infringement on home life
- expects credit for work accomplished
- lenient
- obedient
- accommodating
- neighborly
- takes time to make decisions
- wants guarantee before change
- likes for others to agree
- wants to be appreciated

STYLE_____

- restless
- competitive
- independent
- adventurous
- tends to be dominant
- strong willed
- assertive
- wants immediate results
- self-reliant
- causes action
- vigorous
- likes power and authority
- likes prestige and challenge
- freedom from control and supervision
- wants direct answers
- pioneering
- outspoken
- decisive
- argumentative
- persistent

STYLE_____

- tends to be exciting and stimulating
- inspiring
- generates enthusiasm
- convincing
- often dramatic
- confident
- open and friendly toward others
- likes working with people
- desires to help others
- playful
- likes participating in groups
- persuasive
- wants freedom of expression
- likes recognition for accomplishments
- freedom from detail
- likes stimulating ideas
- likes change
- optimistic
- talkative

I the Controller, II the Persuader, III the Organizer, and IV the Analyzer

I Controller: Action-oriented, needs to be in charge, needs options
Challenge: Difficult time listening
Strengths: Troubleshooter, initiator, idea generator, not intimidated by conflict
Needs: Action, control, options, to make decisions

When communicating with a Controller:
Do: Be clear, stick to business, provide options and probabilities, support results, take issue with the facts, not the person, be efficient
Don't: Waste time, be disorganized, have a ready-made decision, direct or give orders, criticize personally

II Persuader: Social and intuitive person, needs recognition, has dreams
Challenge: Doesn't check enough
Strengths: Entertainer, positive, optimistic, never at loss for words
Needs: Incentives, to be liked, recognition, work with others

When communicating with a Persuader:
Do: Take time to socialize, ask for opinions and ideas, don't deal with detail verbally; put them in writing, be fast moving
Don't: Be curt, leave things hanging, talk down, "dream" too long, argue

III Organizer: Relationship oriented, security minded, likes cooperation
Challenge: Fails to initiate
Strengths: Organized disciplines, team person, courteous
Needs: Security

When communicating with an Organizer:
Do: Show sincere interest/appreciation, be patient and listen, be responsive, present the case softly, minimize risks, provide guarantees
Don't Rush into the agenda, force decisions, be demanding or threatening, offer too many options, offer empty guarantees

IV Analyzer: Logical thinker, likes to be right, needs to be accurate
Challenge: Cannot declare a position
Strengths: Accurate, follows rules and systems, diplomatic
Needs: To be right

When communicating with an Analyzer:
Do: Prepare in advance, list the pros and cons, give time to analyze, provide solid, tangible evidence, avoid confrontation
Don't: Be disorganized, dramatic, casual, overstate, or push for decisions

Exercise: Putting Communication Styles into Practice

Directions:

Based upon the information provided below, explain how these co-workers might effectively communicate to work through the management of the problem. Consider the communication styles of all involved, what should be said, how it should be said, and where it should be said.

Scenario 1: Organizer and Analyzer

An analyzer must communicate to his colleague (organizer) that he is not in compliance with an organizational policy.

Scenario 2: Controller and Persuader

A park representative (persuader) must communicate to the Park Friends group representative (controller) that the project recommended by the group will not be approved by the Superintendent.

Scenario 3: Persuader and Analyzer

A colleague (analyzer) must communicate to his coworker (persuader) that she speaks loudly on the phone and can be heard in his work space.

6 Keys to Healthy Communication

1. Listen carefully to what people say. Watch your filters.

2. Compose your message carefully and seek to collaboratively respond.

3. Remember that we have different styles of communication.

4. If you make a mistake, admit it and do your best to recover from it.

5. Emotions may be too strong to say anything at certain times.

6. Forgiveness is critical to maintaining healthy relationships.

Think about which of these keys you'd like to work on, and put an asterisk next to each.

Definition of "Collaboration"

Collaboration is *a relationship with others that promotes cooperative goals and builds trust*.[1]

Exercise: How Does Communication Enhance Collaboration?

With your group, list the ways that communication tools we've discussed (filters, collaborative responses, communication styles) could enhance collaboration with our colleagues.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

[1] James Kouzes and Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge*. 3rd edition. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco: 2003.

Benefits of Collaborative Behaviors

Why Collaboration is Important

When we experience differences with another person, our initial reaction may be one that seeks to protect our own ego, turf, or message. It can be challenging to let down our defenses to appreciate another's perspective. When we actively seek to engage other's perspectives, however, especially those that are vastly different from ours, the result can be extremely powerful! Differing perspectives are healthy, and can enhance and complement each other to create more stable and viable solutions. This is the essence of collaboration. Because a collaborative approach includes many facets of an issue, and addresses differences of opinion, the result is a solution that can withstand greater tests and challenges than individual ideas alone.

Can you think of an example of when including differing perspectives created an even better solution?

Exercise: Benefits of Collaborative Behaviors

With your group, list behaviors that collaborators exhibit. What are the benefits of these behaviors?

_____

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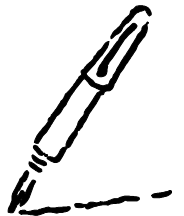
Problem Solving and Collaboration

7 Steps to Problem Solving and Collaboration

1. **Show respect.** Don't insult colleagues by judging, disregarding their beliefs or offering unsolicited advice.

2. **Listen in order to understand.** Use active listening skills. Remember that listening is a process by which we hear what our colleague says, decode the meaning and observe the nonverbal gestures to learn the feelings behind the words. This will help you to use the response appropriately.

3. **Uncover the other person's expectations.** Ask probing questions and be honest in your responses. Don't promise something you cannot deliver.

4. **Paraphrase to check the specifics.** Wait until your colleague has completed his or her thought. Don't react prematurely. When necessary restate or paraphrase to clarify and to ensure that your colleague knows that you are grasping the content of the message.

5. **Offer and outline possible solutions or alternatives soliciting ideas from your colleague.** Collaborate together by assessing how challenging situations are handled and how these situations can inspire positive change. Be careful to come across genuine rather than canned. Don't recite policy in a machine gun fashion.

6. **Make an effort and follow through.** Take action. Say what you can do and then do it.

7. **Double check for satisfaction.** Agree with your colleague regarding what he or she will do and what you will do.

Exercise: Applying Communication and Collaboration Skills

Case Scenario: Vacation Gone Bad!

On a pleasure trip with his family to a National Park, a Congressman was appalled by what he termed the "unresponsiveness and rudeness" of one of the park employees. He immediately contacted the Director of the National Park Service, who contacted the Regional Director. The Regional Director telephoned the Park Superintendent regarding this issue. The Regional Director is very angry and is demanding to know why this behavior was allowed to occur at the facility.

As you observe the scenario, use the checklist *Assessing Your Communication and Collaboration* on the following pages to identify how the 7 steps were used. Cite specific examples.

Assessing Communication and Collaboration Skills

Describe how the 7 steps were demonstrated during the scenario. Cite specific examples.

1.   Show respect.

2.   Listen in order to understand.

3.   Uncover the other person's expectations.

4.   Paraphrase to check the specifics.

| |
|---|
| **5.**　Offer and outline possible solutions or alternatives soliciting ideas from colleague. |
| **6.**　Make an effort and follow through. Take action. |
| **7.**　Double-check for satisfaction. |

Comment on the overall effectiveness of the interaction.

What recommendations might you make for future interactions?

Exercise: How Communication and Collaboration Are Linked

At your site, list several ways that communication and collaboration are linked.

_____

_____

_____

_____
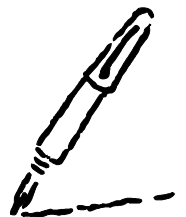
Wrap-Up

Exercise: Action Plan (DUE DATE: November 9, 2004)

Consider an insight you've gained from this course. Think about a communication challenge you will be facing back at work. Identify one practice you would like to implement to build a collaborative effort through enhanced communication as a result of what you've learned. For example, how would you reconsider sending an email message that must address a co-worker's inappropriate behavior?

Specifications:

- Action plan must be 2 paragraphs or less
- Send it in the form of an e-mail to Joann Polcari at italix@dc.rr.com
- Do not include any attachments—type the action plan directly into the e-mail message
- The subject line of the e-mail message should read "**NPS CCC Action Plan ATTN: J. Polcari**"

To Receive Credit for This Course

1. PRINT your name on the attendance roster.
2. Complete the HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT above and submit it to italix@dc.rr.com by November 9, 2004.
3. UPON RECEIPT OF E-MAIL NOTIFICATION, complete the online course evaluation.

Bio for Joann Polcari

JoAnn Polcari, Ph.D.

italix consulting services

Indio and San Diego, CA

email: italix@dc.rr.com

As owner of *italix consulting services*, Joann serves as consultant, educator, author, design expert, and facilitator to public and private organizations throughout the United States, specializing in the areas of leadership development; organizational/team structure and dynamics; communication, change and conflict management, and decision-making strategies; and the professional development of in-house trainers and facilitators. She is certified by AchieveGlobal as a distance learning instructor who has designed and delivered teletraining programs to more than 100 government agencies.

Joann holds a Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology with Leadership emphasis, an M.A. in Pupil Personnel Services (Educational Counseling), and a B.A. in Education with emphasis in Early Childhood.

Awards:

- 2004 National Recipient, USDA Graduate School Excellence in Individual Instruction

- 2004 National Recipient, USDA Graduate School Excellence in Team Instruction

- Former Member, Psi Chi, National Honor Society in Psychology (Doctoral level)